Describing creole: researcher perspectives on endangerment and multilingualism in the Chabacano communities

Eeva Sippola
University of Helsinki

This paper discusses perspectives on language description and endangerment in creole communities, with a special focus on Chabacano-speaking communities in the Philippines. I will show how, from the early days of research on these varieties, linguists with an interest in Chabacano often present the varieties under study as endangered in a moribund state or aim to describe a 'pure' Chabacano system without Philippine or English influences, silencing a great deal of the daily multilingualism and hybrid language practices that have always been present in the communities. In general, this paper sheds light on the complex dynamics of discourses on endangerment and authenticity in research about multilingual communities. It also contributes to the discussion on how these types of contexts challenge common Western assumptions about language loss and on authenticity in multilingual communities.

Keywords: Chabacano, linguistic research, ideology, authenticity, multilingual communities.

1. Introduction

This paper examines practices and ideologies of language description and documentation in the Chabacano-speaking communities in the Philippines. Chabacano is the common name used for creole varieties that have Spanish as the lexifier and Philippine languages as the adstrates and that have historically been spoken in several locations in the Philippines. There is documentation of varieties in Zamboanga, Cotabato, and Davao in Mindanao in the southern Philippines, and in the Ermita district of Manila, Cavite City, and Ternate in the Manila Bay region of the northern island of Luzon. They are for the most part mutually intelligible, but there are sociohistorical circumstances and linguistic differences that distinguish them (Lesho & Sippola 2013, 2014). The speakers of the creole varieties live in multilingual environments, often speaking not only Chabacano but also Tagalog, other Philippine languages, and English.

There exists a relatively long tradition of Chabacano studies, including work by local and foreign linguists alike. Beyond questions of a descriptive and historical nature about the development and structure of the varieties, previous research has paid attention to the differing and sometimes confusing views on the status and nature of Chabacano, especially by the speakers themselves (Forman 2001; Lipski 2010). However, there has been little focus on the linguists' discourses on these varieties. Any discipline or subdiscipline, such as Creole studies or Chabacano studies, when reaching a mature state, must include a reflection of its history and tradition and a constant reevaluation of the fundaments of the discipline. This is clearly stated in the repeated criticism in the field of colonial linguistics that emphasizes the need to re-read philological and linguistic works, paying explicit attention to the political, intellectual, and biographical conditions of its production, as well as the connected ideologies (e.g. Errington 2007). This study aims to fill a part of this void in creolistics focusing on Ibero-Asian varieties by examining discourses of endangerment and authenticity in the academic research on Chabacano in a historical perspective.

The analysis is based on a metalinguistic study of the academic bibliography on Chabacano ranging from the early decades of the past century until more recent works. The works examined do not form a balanced sample but, by examining salient discourses and methodological choices in a selection of them, we can gain insights into the ideological significance of these works and the ways the academic tradition has been formed. Attention will be given to works from early phases of Chabacano research, as exemplified by Tirona (1924), Whinnom's seminal work from the 1950s that sparked much debate in creolistics, and more recent scholarship mainly by foreign researchers. An analysis of discourses and choices in these works can offer insights into how research has been and is done in creole communities and how linguists' conceptualizations about their object of research shape our understanding of linguistic practices in multilingual communities.

The paper is structured as follows. In section two, the study is situated in the frameworks of language ideologies, language endangerment, and multilingualism. In section three, a brief overview of the principal research works on Chabacano is given. Section four presents the main analysis and focuses on the discourses that are observed in selected academic works on Chabacano, with special focus given to language endangerment, purity, and authenticity. The discussion and the conclusions follow in the final sections.

2. Background

2.1. Language ideologies and linguistics

In the same way that speakers' ideologies and attitudes influence their linguistic performance, linguists' ideologies and attitudes can influence their work. Researchers often bring their own metalinguistic systems and ideologies into their analyses of languages that they do not speak natively (Irvine & Gal 2000). Ideologies of language have shaped scholars' mapping and description of linguistic differences in colonial contexts and can also be seen reflected in their methodological practices. More generally, disciplinary methodologies and practices create boundaries, reflecting ideologies that highlight disciplinary differentiation (Irvine & Gal 2000). The ways we choose to make one way of speaking representative is always shaped by broader factors and purposes, allowing questions to be posed about what guides our strategies of selection, and whether these are conscious choices or not (Errington 2007: 10).

Here, language ideology is understood as a set of culturally shaped beliefs and attitudes about language use, values, and norms. These have social meanings, and are connected to academic, moral, and political interests (Silverstein 1979). Language ideologies reflect ideas about the nature of language, the way it should be used, the value of particular languages and varieties, their origins, and their future. Linguistic work and language ideologies are closely interconnected, in how people, both speakers and researchers, conceive of language and speaking, and relate them to territory, identity, aesthetics, spirituality, and other domains (Woodbury 2011: 176). We can examine language ideologies by identifying recurrent patterns in individual discourses that reflect the cultural conceptions of languages, also in linguistic research.

The study of language ideologies in the history of linguistics is not a new endeavor. In the famous Senegalese case, Irvine & Gal (2000) show how, in 19th century works, Fula, Serer, and Wolof were mapped as occupying separated territories and identified with different groups, thus erasing multilingualism and complex sociolinguistic identities and practices that were common in the area. Working from an ideology that identified language with a specific ethnic or racial group, early descriptions of Senegalese languages saw the differences between languages as reflecting differences in ethnic groups' mentalities, histories, and ways of social organization.

In Creole Studies, the most famous debates have centered around connections between racist and colonial ideologies and the status of creole

languages, especially in the French-speaking world (cf. DeGraff 2001). Among studies of Asian creoles, a critical examination of early sources and the language represented in them, as well as the creoles' relationship with the lexifier and the manifold social and ideological dimensions, have received growing attention in recent years in the research of Portuguese creoles (e.g. Cardoso 2007, 2018; Baxter 2012, 2018; Smith 2016; Baxter & Cardoso 2017).

For Chabacano, the discussion on language and linguistic ideologies has been focusing on non-linguists' perceptions of variation, and representations of Chabacano and its lexifier, Spanish (Lipski 2001, 2010; Lesho & Sippola 2014). In addition, Forman (2001) is a refreshing reflection on language endangerment from the point of view of linguists and speakers, and how these views sometimes match, and other times differ. Interestingly, Forman (2001) also discusses how the description and analysis of Zamboanga Chabacano morphosyntax, passive voice, and serial verbs depend on the ways data gathering and analysis are done, and how linguists occasionally disregard data that does not match their hypothesis. As such, Forman's work has served as an inspiration for this study.

2.2. Language endangerment and Chabacano

Language endangerment can be defined as a shift away from unique, local languages and related practices, even if they may still have symbolic or identity functions for the community (Woodbury 2011: 160). A case in point is the Chabacano variety spoken in Cavite City, where the language is severely endangered (Lesho & Sippola 2013: 23). In Cavite City, intergenerational language transmission has ceased and only a few speakers under the age of 50 are left in the city. A general shift to Tagalog (and English) has occurred in the community, although Chabacano still has symbolic value and is used in cultural activities and in the tourist sector. For Ternate Chabacano and Zamboanga Chabacano, the endangerment situation is not as severe. In Ternate, intergenerational language transmission has not ceased (Lesho & Sippola 2013: 23), although the language's situation can be classified as threatened due to its minority status, low number of speakers, and restricted domains of use. Speaker numbers witness a declining trend (from Molony's 8000 in the 1970s to Sippola's 3000 in the 2010s), and the number of Chabacano speakers from the increasing total population of the town has grown proportionally smaller over the years. But, as in Cavite City, Chabacano in Ternate still serves important local identity functions. In Zamboanga, the situation is quite different. There Chabacano has hundreds of thousands of speakers (numbers range between

300,000 and 450,000 speakers according to different estimates). Chabacano functions as the local lingua franca in the Zamboanga region and is also used widely in popular culture, media, and education. Historically, a Chabacano variety in Ermita is also identified, but the speech community was dispersed during World War II, leading to the death of the variety –an extreme outcome of language endangerment.

Language endangerment as a field of inquiry and social interest has been vigorous at least since the last decades of the 20th century, in connection with the rise in interest regarding the loss of biodiversity. While it is true that the factors that motivate speakers to abandon a language and the often-disruptive consequences of language shift for the community are central linguistic and social concerns, more general concerns about the loss of the intangible heritage of humanity are often highlighted: when a language dies, a cultural expression and a unique part of human knowledge disappears. However, critiques of the universal ownership of the intellectual treasure of the world's linguistic and cultural diversity have pointed out that this fact is often used as a justification for outsider intervention and as a way of redirecting attention away from the socioeconomic factors at play in endangerment situations (Hill 2002). This is especially interesting for creole languages, because they have largely been marginalized among endangered languages. Furthermore, Garrett (2006) notes that, due to their lack of historicity and autonomy, contact languages challenge central tropes in the discourses of endangerment. These include portraying languages as organically bound up with place and culture along with the tendency to consider autonomous languages, and especially their lexicons, as unique treasures of human knowledge. As transplanted groups, the creole communities rarely have primordial ties to the territories they inhabit, and likewise, their ethnic identities may also be based on multiple traditions and are often of a hybrid nature, and thus more open to negotiation and contestation (Garrett 2006).

2.3. Language practices in the Chabacano communities

The diversity of hybrid language practices has been recognized for several Chabacano communities in different historical periods. Fernández & Sippola (2017) show how different restructured varieties of Spanish, including Chabacano, were used in Manila in the mid-19th century. Depending on the ethnic and social affiliations and the availability of multilingual resources, the speakers could employ diverse codes according to context.

Even today, the Chabacano communities are multilingual, and language practices are hybrid in nature, as in many other Philippine settings, where local languages are used in addition to the national language Filipino,[1] English, and other regional lingua francas (e.g. Lesho & Sippola 2013). In Cavite City and Ternate, Chabacano is a minority language, and the varieties are in competition with the official languages, Filipino and English, both of which enjoy a high social status in the current climate and are instrumental for social advancement. Cavite and Ternate Chabacano are used primarily in private domains. In Zamboanga, Chabacano is a lingua franca of the Zamboanga Peninsula and nearby islands. It is codified and used in broadcasting, in popular music, in church, and also in school, as part of the Philippines' new mother tongue education program (Lesho & Sippola 2013). In the Philippines in general, English dominates the government, education, business, and media domains, while Filipino is mostly employed for local communication, certain school subjects, and entertainment (e.g. Gonzalez 1998: 503).

The communities' responses to linguistic, economic, and educational shifts in the local and global dimensions affect the nature of language practices in these communities. Changes in writing practices (Sippola 2016a) and new domains of language use for Chabacano, such as rap music (Sippola 2016b), in the Manila Bay varieties, are good examples that show how multilingual and multicultural resources are appropriated according to local needs and contexts. Naturally, the language endangerment situation is a major factor in these processes, in that it affects the knowledge of, skills in, and attitudes about the creole. Also, language ideologies about the former colonial and current national languages Spanish, Filipino, and English shape the multilingual resources and their use. For example, Spanish has a special role for language preservation purposes in Ternate. Speakers may select Spanish elements and use them to index a historical connection to the former prestige language. In the Tagalog- and English-dominated context of today, Spanish is also used to highlight aspects of local authenticity and identity. In addition, English has an interesting role within the communities. English is gaining foot as the international prestige language of many Philippine communities, but it is not recognized as a threat towards the endangerment of Chabacano (Lesho & Sippola 2014). This is due to a positive ideology related to it, as English-speaking international schools and the use of English in higher education are associated with the possibility of obtaining a position in the international labor market and better employment opportunities.

[1] Filipino is largely based on Tagalog.

3. Linguistic descriptions of Chabacano

Chabacano has interested researchers from the days of Schuchardt (1883). While Schuchardt[2] collected his data through correspondence and never visited the Philippines, there is a tradition of linguistic and cultural studies of Chabacano since the 1920s, based at least partly on data collected in situ, starting with papers included in the Otley Beyer collection of Studies in Philippine Languages. Although, for reasons of space, it would not be possible to survey Chabacano research fully, a brief overview is given here in order to contextualize the analysis of selected samples in the following sections.

Some of the best-known early works include Tirona's 1924 paper on the Ternate variety and Santos y Goméz's (1924) paper on folk tales and word lists of Caviteño, as well as Alfredo Germán's thesis on Cavite Chabacano from the 30s. Among publications from the 50s (e.g. McKaughan 1956; Miranda 1956) Whinnom's (1956) seminal work on Chabacano is a milestone, while in the 60s and 70s, a number of studies were published on different aspects and varieties (e.g. Maño 1963; Ing 1968; Frake 1971; Llamado 1972; Forman 1972; Molony 1973, 1977). This trend continued in the 1980s with contributions by local and international experts (e.g. Lipski 1987, 1988; Riego de Dios 1989) leading into a discipline of Chabacano studies at the start of the new millennium, as seen in the first collective volume edited by Fernández (2001a) and many subsequent works (e.g. Fernández 2006, 2011, 2012b; Lipski 2010, 2013; Grant 2011; Sippola 2011; Lesho & Sippola 2013, 2014; Fernández & Sippola 2017).

These works represent different descriptive, historical, and sociolinguistic aspects of the Chabacano varieties, including both (sketch) grammars and dictionaries. Most linguists working on these varieties have been outsiders to the communities, but some native speakers have also embarked on the task of explaining the nature of Chabacano (in the past 50 years, e.g. Riego de Dios 1979 for Cotabato Chabacano, and Llamado 1972 and Escalante 2005 for Cavite Chabacano).

4. Analysis

We already find mentions of endangerment and discussion of its causes in the early works, and that continues into more recent ones. In the following

[2] Schuchardt (1883) is not examined in this paper, due to limitations of space. For comments on this early work, see e.g. Fernández (2010, 2012a).

subsection, a number of selected examples are discussed.

4.1. Predicting language loss and reasons for endangerment

Today, the different Chabacano varieties are endangered in varying degrees, and, in the Chabacano research tradition, there are mentions of language endangerment and the low number of speakers for each of them. The degree to which reflections on these topics are central, or even salient, in such academic works varies. In most cases, language endangerment is mentioned in the preface and/or conclusions as a motivation for conducting a study of the language.

With regard to Ternate Chabacano, Tirona (1924) is the earliest work in which we find a reference to speaker numbers and the disappearance of the variety:

> (1) Whatever may have caused the disregard of this dialect, be it the insignificant number of the speakers, the gradual disappearance of the dialect itself […] it seemed a proper undertaking for a member of the class in Philippines Linguistics to make a record of […] the so-called "Ternate-dialect". (Tirona 1924: 1)

In example (1), the low numbers of speakers are mentioned as an explanation for "the disregard of the dialect" in the academic field. According to Tirona (1924), low speaker numbers might have caused the variety to go unnoticed, and low numbers might also cause a threat to its survival in general. Fortunately, we observe that, almost a century after Tirona's observations, Ternate Chabacano has not yet disappeared, but continues to be spoken in the same town that Tirona visited for his study. It is known that small speech communities can also maintain their minority language if certain conditions of language attitudes and functions are met, although they are naturally more vulnerable to changes in the speaker population (UNESCO 2003; Thomason 2015). However, the focus on the academic disregard – and not on the disregard of the speakers – is of special interest here. Not concerned with social causes that might lead speakers to abandon their language, Tirona places emphasis on his task as a linguist, a man of science, in order to document this particular dialect in the linguistic geography of the Philippines.

In Tirona's paper (1924), and the one by Santos y Gómez (1924), the varieties are labelled as dialects. Even Tagalog is referred to as "native dialect" (Santos y Gómez 1924: preface). It is not uncommon in the linguistic tradition describing Philippine languages to label any local language as a dialect. This labeling differentiates 'dialect' from 'language', which is reserved for any major language that has an official status and a strong written tradition, while

'dialect' is used when talking about vernacular languages that are mostly oral and lacking official recognition. This view also reflects the status of many vernacular languages and the difficulties their speakers encounter when interacting on formal occasions at the regional or national level. However, the term "native dialect" establishes a clear connection with the originality and locality of the variety in question, attributing to Tagalog a primordial connection to its territory, and thus differentiating it from the creole varieties that lack a similar connection (cf. Garrett 2006).

The most famous and prominent linguistic study about Chabacano is probably Whinnom (1956), which influenced the thinking of many creolists by positing a monogenetic scenario for the birth of Chabacano (and, later, other creoles). Due to the study's importance in the field, I will dedicate some attention to its statements regarding endangerment, although some errors in Whinnom's data and estimations have been pointed out in previous research (e.g. Fernández 2001b).

In the preface of the book, although acknowledging the dangers of concluding anything about the extinction of any language, Whinnom states the following:

> (2) Bloomfield referred to them [i.e., Chabacano varieties; E.S.] as extinct in 1933 and they are, it is to be feared, rapidly dying out […] it seems a fair assumption that in another generation there will not be a native speaker of these languages left. (Whinnom 1956: preface)

Whinnom bases this assumption on the difficulty of finding samples and speakers of Ermitaño and Caviteño and on the fact that, according to his own inquiries, the language "is rapidly disintegrating". Whinnom was certainly right about the fate of Ermita Chabacano, in stating that Ermitaño had already lost the unity of the community due to the destruction caused by World War II (Whinnom 1956: 14). Likewise, even in later works (Lipski 1987: 91; Riego de Dios 1989: 9; Grant 2007: 174), the variety of Ermita is regularly referred to as extinct, moribund, or on the verge of extinction.

With regard to Cavite Chabacano, Whinnom (1956: 12) states that "the circumstances which attended the birth of the language are no longer active in Cavite", and that "Caviteño is now less a bond than a barrier to communication with native or Spaniard alike" and that shift towards English is in progress. Likewise, a decade later, Llamado (1969: 4) states in her thesis that the number of Chabacano speakers is rapidly decreasing in Cavite City. She sees this development as causing the language to be so insignificant that it has escaped the attention of language researchers so far, in a similar vein to Tirona's

statement from 1924. Llamado (1969: 3) also identifies the prominent role of Tagalog and English, and intermarriages between Caviteños and people from other regions as the causes for the decline of Chabacano in Cavite. This sociolinguistic framing of the structural analysis in her thesis is not present in an article which was based on it and published a couple of years later (Llamado 1972).

With no prior visit to Zamboanga and relying on inadequate estimations of the number of speakers, Whinnom reaches similar conclusions about the southern variety as he did for Cavite Chabacano. Although remarking that the variety is still used commonly and extensively, Whinnom sees the extinction in Zamboanga as inevitable in the near future:

> (3) It is still in common use in Zamboanga City and the surrounding villages. […] There does not seem to be, however, any clear standard of Chavacano, and one hears everything from dialect thickly larded with Tagalog and Visayan words, to one in which the effects of Spanish contamination are clearly perceptible, for Spanish too is more vigorous in Zamboanga City than in almost any other place in the Philippines. This language also, therefore, is doomed to extinction, and that adprobably [sic.] in the space of another generation. (Whinnom 1956: 15)

In addition, it is also noteworthy that the collection of papers in Fernández (2001a) has language endangerment as a central theme (e.g. Wurm 2001; Thomason 2001). In the introduction, Fernández (2001b: vii) mentions the concern of the speakers regarding the status and future of the language and the low numbers of speakers for certain varieties, although, in the context of Philippine languages, the Chabacano varieties as a whole have a relatively large number of speakers, according to census data from 1995. Here, the starting point seems to have been speakers' perspectives, brought into dialogue with expert creolists' views on endangerment.

In more recent work, Sippola (2011: 13-14) mentions the threatened status of Ternate Chabacano in the introductory chapters to her descriptive grammar and offers a brief assessment of the sociolinguistic situation. This is presented as one of the motivations for documenting the variety in question. Lesho & Sippola (2013) take a stand on the endangerment of the Manila Bay creoles by evaluating the sociolinguistic situation of the communities within the UNESCO framework of language vitality. It is the only piece of work in the Chabacano literature that provides an actual assessment of the endangerment of these varieties in a methodologically sound manner.

Notable exceptions that do not make any statements regarding the endangered status of the varieties are the works of North American linguists in

the 1970s and more recent studies by Fernández (2006, 2011), or even later works by Lipski (2010, 2013), who has mentioned the issue in earlier publications. Frake (1971), Forman (1972), and Molony (1973, 1977) do not take the endangerment situation as a starting point for grounding their research, nor do they make any qualifying references to the number of speakers. Only Forman (1972) notes that his impression of the number of speakers in Zamboanga was much higher than the one reported in Whinnom (1956).

As seen from the examples above, the main reason that leads to language extinction, or at least a status of severe endangerment, is perceived in several works to be the low number of speakers. But it is not the only motivation identified. Mixing with Spanish and Tagalog, variation, and the absence of a standard are also identified as additional causes, as in example quote (3). Furthermore, the degree to which endangerment is discussed in the various studies seems to correlate with the topics and approaches taken by their authors. Descriptive and sociolinguistic studies often mention endangerment or treat the matter directly, while more recent studies focusing on formation history or processes of language change do not take issue with this topic. In addition, certain historical periods seem to favor one approach over the other.

4.2. Bad mixing

Observations about variation, mixing and lack of standard are related to the status of Chabacano as a language as opposed to a jargon or bad Spanish. In linguistics, it has long been acknowledged that creole languages are fully adequate natural languages that serve the full functional and communicative needs of their speakers, but early descriptions by non-experts (and occasionally experts alike) do not always adhere to this view. Even Whinnom (1956: 15) uses expressions such as “dialect thickly larded” and “contamination” when speaking of Zamboanga Chabacano which have clear negative associations.

These ideological stances become especially problematic when they have an effect on data collection and selection in research work. It is clear that all descriptive linguistic work has to do with selecting samples and examples deemed suitable for certain purposes, and in many cases, the quest for objectivity might be a mere ideal. However, the linguistic literature on Chabacano offers some insight into how these processes of data selection guide the understanding of Chabacano as a language and as part of the repertoire of its speakers. Not all works in the Chabacano research tradition describe data collection procedures, but some examples can nevertheless be found. In

example 4, Tirona provides the following detail about his data treatment procedure:

> (4) […] the same fable […] which President Clemente Dirain had given me and which was slightly altered to this end by my instructors in Manila. (Tirona 1924)

Tirona had collected a number of old words in Ternate stemming from an ancestral, non-creole language of the group (a language of Maluku) and presented them in his paper as a list with meanings. In order to better demonstrate their use, Tirona and his associates altered the story told by an older Ternate Chabacano speaker, adding the old words into the sentences. For this purpose, he used the help of Ternateño students residing in Manila, from whom he also collected additional comments and material.

Whinnom's (1956) data consist of reproductions of written Chabacano texts, such as poems, folk songs and folk stories (reproduced from Santos y Gómez (1924) for Caviteño). The texts contain no instances of code switching or influences from Tagalog or English. No mention is made of their edition beyond the original, but critique has pointed out some of their shortcomings in comparison with other contemporary texts (Fernández & Sippola 2017: 306-307).

The studies from the 70s and 80s present varied approaches to linguistic description and rarely make any mention of data collection procedures. Forman (1972) uses not only performed dialogues by native speakers of Zamboanga Chabacano, but also conversations between himself and native speakers that were written down at the time of the conversation, and a story-telling session between two native speakers. Transcriptions were mainly done and checked in cooperation with Chabacano speakers. Forman (1972: 21) mentions one speaker occasionally slipping into Tagalog but correcting himself later on and editing the Tagalog passages out of the texts. As a native speaker, Llamado (1972) uses introspection to form the example sentences in her work, while Lipski (1987, 1988) only mentions that the data were collected *in situ*.

A more recent example of data treatment is discussed in my own work (Sippola 2011). For the purposes of writing a descriptive grammar of Ternate Chabacano, I chose to discard samples with a high level of code switching between Chabacano and Tagalog or English, as stated in quote (5). The purpose was to have fluent samples of the creole that would not have interference from the other languages spoken in the community.

> (5) Selected samples based on criteria such as fluidity. … discarding speech that has a high level of code switching between Chabacano and Tagalog or English. (Sippola 2011: 32; translation E.S.)

Elsewhere, in the introduction to the grammar (Sippola 2011: 15), I explain that, naturally, there exist different styles or varieties of Ternate Chabacano. Of these, especially the Chabacano spoken by young people and by persons that do not have knowledge of Spanish is more influenced by Tagalog lexical items, pronunciation, and code switching, while older speakers tend to use Spanish as a reference. However, this variation is not analyzed in detail in the grammar.

From these examples, we can see that, although it is clear that all academic works recognize the mixed origins of the creole varieties, they are mainly described without significant influence from the main contact languages of today, Tagalog or English.[3] Thus, the diversity of language practices and their hybrid nature is not present in a central manner in academic works about Chabacano. To some degree, the idea of a standard, a single, normativized language can be perceived at the background of both popular and specialist works on Chabacano. Dorian (1998) talks about an "ideology of contempt" towards minority languages in general, and contact languages in particular, based on the idea of a single, narrativized language, where multilingualism is understood as being complicated and cumbersome. Also in descriptive Chabacano research, language mixing is seen as something undesirable, and studies of actual language practices of the creole-speaking communities are still lacking (for an exception, see Tobar 2016). Although some contemporary work (e.g. Fernández 2007; Sippola 2011; Lesho & Sippola 2013) mentions that code-switching and multilingual practices are frequent in the Philippines, this is rarely reflected in the data collection procedures. As creolists, we are often mainly interested in describing the creole variety free of interferences from other codes present in the communities.

It is to be admitted that, beyond the examples that disregard multilingual resources and practices in the creole communities, a general change from attitudes that saw mixing and variation as leading towards the extinction has clearly occurred, and a more modern view on variation as an inherent part of human languages has emerged in recent years (e.g. Lipski 2013). In addition, it is obvious that disciplinary traditions can have an effect on the goals and frameworks used in the studies. From a hispanist's perspective, Chabacano is one of the few Spanish creoles around the globe, and studies (such as Quilis &

[3] There are some notable exceptions. For example, Fernández (2007) and Tobar (2016) use mainly examples from an online corpus not edited for research purposes.

Casado-Fresnillo 2008) that take the historical connection and relationship with Spanish as a guideline are thus easily explained.

5. Discussion: Is the 'authentic' creole getting lost?

The threat of language endangerment is a reality for some Chabacano varieties today. A look at studies from different time periods in the Chabacano tradition has shown that, from early on, the role of endangerment has also been central in discourses motivating research. The low number of speakers and the mixed nature of the creole are frequently identified as the reasons for endangerment.

The threat of endangerment is used to motivate the need and urgency in researching and documenting the language before its total disappearance, not only in modern studies but also in early works from the 1920s and 1950s, before the birth of language endangerment and documentation as a contemporary field of study. On the other hand, Chabacano research has dealt with the theme of endangerment in response to speakers' concerns and wishes. This has been a way to fulfill the social functions of contemporary (socio)linguistics, where cooperation with speaker communities is an ethical standard.

Other motivations for endangerment identified in the early Chabacano literature are the mixing of the creole with Spanish and Tagalog, variation, and the lack of a standard. This last factor can be clearly connected with standard language ideology, which formed in the context of the European national movements and related processes of language standardization since the 19th century and spread throughout the world (Dorian 1998). In the context of multilingual creole communities that mostly use the creole in an oral form, a standard would not necessarily reflect the linguistic reality in a comprehensive manner. It is nevertheless clear that speakers of creole languages themselves have ideas about a standard and related attitudes and linguistic evaluations, and often hope to provide one for their language (for Chabacano examples, see Escalante 2005; Miravite *et al.* 2009). As for mixing, it is always identified in the origins of the creole but mixing with contemporary Tagalog resources or elements is occasionally faded out in exchange for a clearer picture of the 'real' creole variety. These methodological practices are not unknown in the creolist tradition, where data have been discarded as not basilectal, 'traditional', or 'creole' enough (Patrick 1999; Lesho & Sippola 2014).

Naturally, placing the focus on one imagined variety in descriptive studies can be due to different motivations that are also discussed in the methodological literature. First of all, the research questions and aims guide the selection of material, while the attempt to control the impact of the Observer's Paradox can have an effect on the selection of the variety, particularly when the

interviewer is associated with one of the languages in the linguistic ecology of the creole (cf. Sippola 2018: 103-104). In addition, knowing the linguistic features of the variety least affected by mixing practices and other effects of language shift is a necessary first step to understand phenomena such as code-switching or hypercorrection.[4]

Part of the Chabacano research thus works on the premise of an imagined Chabacano that serves, or is hoped to serve, as the basis for the description of the creole. It can be described as an authentic variety, relatively free of influences from other languages. This authentic variety is spoken by old people, as is often the case in language endangerment situations, where intergenerational language shift is no longer happening. This also relates with the moribund state in which the varieties are presented in several studies.

In Ternate, the ideas of authenticity and originality have a special role. This creole variety has been described in the literature since Tirona (1924) and Whinnom (1956) as the descendant of the original contact variety brought to the Philippines at some point in the 17th century. It has an ancient connection with Ternate in Maluku, in the form of old lexical items, as seen in Tirona (1924), traditional dances, or even in the physical appearance of the speakers (Tirona 1924; Nigoza 2007). Also, adding to the special nature and distinctiveness of the Ternate variety, it is occasionally mentioned, by speakers and linguists alike (cf. Whinnom 1956: 9; Batalha 1960; Lesho & Sippola 2014: 39-40), that the variety has a Portuguese element which shows evidence of its origins outside the Philippines. However, the value of the linguistic evidence supporting the Portuguese connection is debated (e.g. Lipski 1988). In Cavite and Zamboanga, the ancestral connection is instead established with the Spanish component of the language. For example, Zamboanga is promoted as the Latin City of Asia, and Cavite City highlights its Spanish heritage through the creole language for tourism purposes (Lesho & Sippola 2013: 19).

Although best known from sociolinguistics, this discussion shows that the concept of authenticity is a useful tool for examining ideologies in modern multilingual and descriptive studies. Authenticity is embedded in the notion of the vernacular, in our relation to linguistics, in field methods, and in the understandings of the indexical nature of variation (cf. Eckert 2014). Linking a variety or code to authenticity can be problematic if it excludes other varieties or a part of the language users that are not deemed competent enough in the creole. The community's link to an ancestral code in language endangerment and revitalization settings can actually be counterproductive, if the ideological pressures towards one variety are too strong (cf. Woodbury 2011). The role of ideologies of authenticity and their effects towards research more generally

[4] I would like to thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing out some aspects mentioned in this paragraph.

have also been recognized in shaping the image of certain linguistic practices as 'authentic', while others are not given such a role (e.g. Lüpke 2013 for the African context).

In Woodbury's (2011: 178) terms, documentation of the ancestral code can be characterized as nostalgic. A special importance is given to a form of speech which gives evidence of a feature of the past, regardless of whatever that selection's actual use and future might be. This can be done by speakers or linguists alike. On the one hand, nostalgic tendencies are found in the search for linguistic reconstruction or the most traditional forms in linguists' works (such as Tirona's additions of old lexical items to his narratives) or the search for non-Tagalog-influenced forms in more contemporary research. On the other hand, the general public often adheres to purism, traditionalism, and identity functions as forms of nostalgia, as seen in the symbolic functions of Chabacano items in the communities. And, though discussed here under a critical lens, it is evident that this highlighting of the distinctiveness of the creole can also serve attempts towards language preservation and other functions of empowerment among the minority community (cf. Sippola 2016a, 2016b for Chabacano).

Overall, as seen in the works on Chabacano, the whole documentary linguistic tradition is constructed on the idea of recording a single 'language', and even more so, a particular variety of that language that serves the role of the 'ancestral code' (Woodbury 2011). However, when choosing to document or describe the 'authentic' creole, a great deal of the daily multilingualism and hybrid language practices of the communities are thus erased, or at least silenced, by setting them aside. In highly multilingual and fluid linguistic contexts, such as the Chabacano communities, multilingual repertoires do not match the idea of 'native' languages or 'ancestral' codes (cf. Garrett 2006; Childs *et al.* 2014). However, these practices and repertoires might be significant for the documentation of the processes of endangerment as well. In order to study the beginning or middle stages of language shift and attrition, the focus should be on a large body of bilingual speakers that have multilingual resources at their disposal. But, in descriptive and documentary linguistic work, the attention is sometimes only given to speakers that are valued as fluent and competent enough from the perspective of the authentic variety. Grenoble (2013: 43) describes this state of affairs in documentary linguistics as "a clear kind of linguistic purism".

This discussion shows that part of the endangerment discourse is actually built on researcher ideologies that serve as a motivation for research and construct an imagined variety within the historical context and given methodologies of descriptive studies. Due to their hybrid nature, Chabacano, and creoles in general, challenge the categories that serve as the basis for these ideas (cf. 2.2). Multilingual practices have been and still are common among

the Chabacano communities, and they are appropriated by the speakers for different purposes (cf. 2.3). The imagined 'authentic' creole might indeed be on the way to attrition, but the process can be better described as a shift in progress due to contact with the languages in the current environment of the language.

6. Conclusion

This paper has shed light on the practices and ideologies of language description and documentation in the Chabacano-speaking communities of the Philippines. Although different practices are found in the history of Chabacano research, linguists with an interest in Chabacano often present the varieties under study as endangered or in a moribund state, threatened by other languages and mixing practices of the communities. Academic discourses on endangerment and ways of selecting and presenting data reveal a cult of authenticity where an imagined creole variety is extracted for the purposes of description. These approaches omit a great deal of the daily multilingualism and hybrid language practices that have probably always been present in the Chabacano communities. The results show how ideas about endangerment, mixing, and authenticity affect research in complex ways. They also contribute to the discussion on how these types of contexts challenge common assumptions about language shift and loss, and authenticity in multilingual communities.

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